

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-59 L-03 DHA-02 ORM-02 IO-13 IGA-02

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P R 192030Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1131

INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

AMEMBASSY QUITO

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 2304

JOINT STATE-AID MESSAGE

GUATEMALA FOR ROCAP

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM ES

SUBJ: PROPOSED HUMAN RIGHTS PROJECT

REF: A STATE 117015, B A-21 MAR 1, 1975

1. FROM THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THE REF (A) DESCRIPTION
OF THE PROJECTED STUDY, THIS MISSION BELIVES THAT A CRITICAL
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AND ESSENTIAL ELEMENT APPEARS MISSING. AS WE UNDERSTAND THE

PROPOSAL, THE INVESTIGATION WOULD BE UNDERTAKEN BY A PRIVATE ENTITY (ASI) BASED IN WASHINGTON, WITH THE "SUPPORT" AND POSSIBLE PARTICIPATION OF THE OAS IJC. BEFORE THE EMBASSY AND AID COULD COMMENT ON THE DESIRABILITY OF USG INVOLVEMENT, WE WOULD FIRST HAVE TO DETERMINE THE REACTION OF THE HOST GOVERNMENT TO THE PROPOSAL. FOR ALL OF THE REASONS WHICH FOLLOW, THE MISSION:

(1) FIRMLY BELIEVES GOES APPROVAL OF THE INVESTIGATION BEING CONDUCTED IN EL SALVADOR IS A SINE QUUKNON BEFORE THE USG PROCEEDS; AND (2) IS LESS THAN OPTIMISTIC THAT THE GOES WOULD OFFER SUCH APPROVAL.

2. FYI: THERE IS NO AREA OF GREATER POLITICAL SENSITIVITY FOR THE GOES THAN THAT IN WHICH THIS EFFORT WOULD BE MADE, I.E., THAT OF ATTEMPTING TO AMPLIFY THE VOICE OF THE COUNTRY'S DISADVANTAGED IN THEIR ADMITTEDLY LEGITIMATE DEMANDS FOR GREATER SOCIAL AND LEGAL JUSTICE. THIS SENSITIVITY WOULD BE PARTICULARLY ACUTE CONCERNING THE PUBLIC INTEREST LAW NEEDS OF THE RURAL POOR, AND ONLY SLIGHTLY LESS SO REGARDING THEIR URBAN COUNTERPARTS. THE FACT THAT THE STUDY WOULD BE CONDUCTED BY FOREIGNERS ONLY ENHANCES THE PROBABILITY OF DAMAGING FALL-OUT. THAT THE ASIL STUDY WOULD BE CONDUCTED WITH THE BLESSINGS OF THE OAS IJC, WOULD HARDLY AMELIORATE THE SITUATION. IT COULD, IN FACT, MAKE THE HOST GOVERNMENT MORE UNCOMFORTABLE AND PRONE TO OVERREACT TO ADVERSE COMMENT. THE GOES, AND THE POPULACE AS A WHOLE, IS EXTREMELY WARY OF OUTSIDERS COMMENTING ON, OR WORSE INVOLVING THEMSELVES IN, DOMESTIC SALVADORAN AFFAIRS. THIS HAS BEEN REPEATEDLY, AND OFTEN FORCEABLY, DEMONSTRATED DURING THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION'S TENURE. THE BEST EXAMPLE WOULD BE THE 1973 TERMINATION OF AIFLD'S IN-COUNTRY PROGRAM, WHEREIN THE GOES PERCEIVED A FOREIGN ENTITY PARTICIPATING IN EFFORTS TO ELEVATE AND STRENGTHEN THE COLLECTIVE VOICE OF THE CAMPESINO SECTOR. THIS ALLERGIC REACTION TO FOREIGN INTER-FERENCE HAS NOT ABATED. WITH THE COUNTRY ENTERING WHAT PROMISES TO BE A YEAR OF CONTINUOUS TENSION AS THE PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION IS WORKED OUT, THIS SENSITIVITY CAN BE EXPECTED TO INCREASE.

3. THE REF (B) GAVE THIS MISSION'S BEST PERCEPTION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN EL SALVADOR. IT PORTRAYED A GROSSLY UNDERDEVELOPED LEGAL SYSTEM IN WHICH THE PEOPLE JUSTIFIABLY HAVE

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LITTLE OR NO CONFIDENCE. WHAT 'JUSTICE' IS DISPENSED BARELY REACHES THE RURAL POOR. WHEN IT DOES, IT IS MOST LIKELY USED AGAINST THEM. THE GOVERNMENT, AND ALMOST EVERYONE ELSE, IS AWARE OF THIS FACT. MOST OF THE "HAVES" OF THE COUNTRY, AND THOSE IN THE GOES WHO BELIEVE THE FIRST PRIORITY OF THIS OR ANY REGIME MUST BE STABILITY AND ORDER, PREFER IT THIS WAY. THOSE FEW WHO URGE THAT THIS BE CHANGED DO SO IN THE CONTEXT OF REFORMS COMING FROM WITHIN, DESIGNED AND IMPLEMENTED BY SALVADORANS.

END FYI.

4. IF THE DEPARTMENT WISHES THE MISSION TO ELICIT GOES THOUGHTS
ON THE FEASIBILITY OF THIS PROJECT, WE WOULD APPRECIATE SPECIFIC
INSTRUCTIONS TO THAT EFFECT.

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